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DEC 19 2007

Ravalli County Commissioners

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December 19, 2007

Carlotta:

Please read and consider carefully the attached report regarding the dangerous condition of many of the cottonwood trees bordering Fairgrounds Road along the Fairgrounds property.

Gary and/or I would like to meet with you, and any other County Commissioners who would like to be included, at your earliest convenience regarding this report.

Win C. Smith



Gary Wiley <rcfairgrounds@gmail.com>

FW: Tree Report

1 message

Lennon, Mark <mlennon@mt.gov>

To: "rcfairgrounds@gmail.com" <rcfairgrounds@gmail.com>

Fri, Dec 14, 2007 at 9:07 AM

From: Lennon, Mark
Sent: Thursday, December 13, 2007 5:09 PM
To: Gary Wiley
Subject: Tree Report

Dear Gary,

Hope everything is going better for you and your family.

I am sending you my report on the trees.

If you have any questions on the report please give me a call.

Also, I am a short timer and will be retiring at the end of the month, but please call me at home after that date if you still have questions.

Thank you,

Mark Lennon
Office 883-5599
Home 883-4868

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Ravalli County Fairground' Trees
By Mark Lennon
Community Forester
MT DNRC

I was ask by Gary Wiley, General Manager of the Ravalli County Fairgrounds to evaluate nineteen cottonwood trees at the Fairgrounds as to their structural condition and overall health. And to what extent do these trees pose a hazard to the citizens of Ravalli County. This report addresses only the cottonwood trees along Fairgrounds Road inside the Fairgrounds fence.

With the help of Kurt Gelderman, DNRC Service Forester, we evaluated three major factors (tree species, potential targets and defects present). The Populus species are a fast growing species that tend to be weak wooded and non-resistant to decay, as a result are more likely to fail in high winds, heavy snow or dry hot summer days. Hazard trees are considered trees with structural defects and targets to hit if they fail. All of these trees would be considered a hazard tree because of their tree defects and high priority targets (frequent use by people, sidewalk, street parking area, playground equipment) to hit if they fail.

Each tree was tagged with a numbered tag and probed with a drill fitted with a 1/8x10 inch drill bit. The method is to determine the amount or thickness of sound wood in each tree. This thickness was compared to the average minimum thickness of sound wood needed to support the tree. **Seventeen of the trees ranked high risk or critical risk with two at medium risk.**

High Risk trees are those with some sort of structural defect or location that increase the chance of failing. Those failures result in property damage or personal injury. A target (cars, buildings or people) must be close enough for a tree or its branches to fall on before a hazard exists. This is especially true where people's presence is invited.

Critical risk: considered even higher risk and are not safe to climb.

Many of the trees had visible holes in the trunk or limbs, that would indicate rot higher up in the canopy of the tree. Four or five trees have had large branches broken off high in their crowns. We did not inspect the crowns with aerial lifts, only visually from the ground.

Over the life of the trees they have been subjected to pruning and fires that have damaged the trunks, which has resulted in rot in the trees stem and

crown. Large limbs were severed and opened to decay organisms. Over the years the decay has moved up and down the stem weakening the structure of the large limbs in the crown.

Decay in the branches must be treated as high risk. Even small branches shedding from 60 to 90 feet will cause severe damage on people or property. Due to the condition of these trees they have become a liability to the county and a hazard to the users of the Fairgrounds and road.

With my examination of the trees I have tried to document each tree's condition based on my visual observations and correlate the visual observations with their internal condition. I cannot predict which trees will fail and cause injury or damage. I cannot predict when any of these trees or parts of trees may fall. I can state that all of these trees have high potential to fail.

To help reduce risk associated with the identified tree hazards, I recommend that the county develop a strategy to reduce hazards where they exist. In my opinion the options to reduce hazard from these trees involve tree removal or closure of the area surrounding these trees until the high risk is mitigated.

Special note: Tree # 15's trunk divides into two large limbs, one limb hangs over both lanes of the road. The limb over the road has an active crack which indicates to me that the limb is in the process of failing. I would recommend that the limb or the tree be removed as soon as possible.

I have included a Tree Evaluation Table, which summarizes the individual tree conditions.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Mark Lennon
DNRC Community Forester
406-883-5599

TREE EVALUATION TABLE FOR FAIRGROUNDS

TREE #	DBH/Ht	DEFECTS	Recommended Action
1	72"/105'	The amount of trunk decay ranks tree as a Critical Risk, lg. Trunk cavity, # of trunk holes, root flare rot	Remove
2	64"/107'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, lg trunk cavity, several broken, dead & high risk limbs, swelling in trunk	Remove
3	69"/108'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, trunk seams, trunk swelling, large dead limb, old pruning wounds	Remove
4	39"/106'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as High Risk,	Remove
5	52"/109'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, two trunk cavities, several dead br.	Remove
6	78"/110'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, 2 tr. Cavities, old branch stubs	Remove
7	50"/112'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Medium Risk, rot in root flares	Remove or monitor
8	37"/70'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk	Remove
9	40"/115'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Medium Risk, rot at base of tree	Remove or monitor
10	60"/92'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, large cavity, branch stubs, bird holes in stem	Remove
11	58"/105'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, large cavity, seam crack, trunk swell.	Remove
12	68"/104'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, lg cavity, bird holes, trunk swell.	Remove
13	55"/103'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, lg cavity, 2 large branch stubs	Remove
14	42"/104'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as High Risk, large branch stub, trunk swelling	Remove
15	55"/105'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, s. fork failing, active crack	Remove immediately
16	48"/90'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, large cavities, very rotten, dying	Remove
17	48"/97'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, lots of rot, dead branch, Tree dying	Remove
18	44"/105'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, lots of rot, swelling, dead br, dying	Remove
19	46"/104'	The amount of trunk decay present ranks tree as Critical Risk, lots of rot, Tree dying	Remove